Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAMA 00163 01 OF 04 101403Z

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ACTION NEA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 1857

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UAE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT LEBANON

AMEMBASSY CAIRO ARE

AMEMBASSY DOHA QATAR

AMEMBASSY AMMAN JORDAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

MEMBASSY LONDON UK 0169

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT OMAN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW USSR

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PK

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI INDIA

MEMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN 0330

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV ISRAEL

USINT BAGHDAD IRAQ

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 4 MANAMA 0163

LIMDIS

CORRECT EDCOPY (TEXT)

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

TOSEC

E.O. 11652 : GDS TAGS : PFOR, BA

SUBJECT : BAHRAIN'S FOREIGN POLICY

SUMMARY: ON ITS OWN SINCE 1971 GOB HAS FORGED REALISTIC FOREIGN

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PAGE 02 MANAMA 00163 01 OF 04 101403Z

POLICY WHICH RECOGNIZES IRAN (QUIETLY) AND SAUDI ARABIA

(OUDLY) AS ESSENTIAL TO BAHRAIN'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SURVIVAL. BEYOND THIS ESSENTIAL, GOOD RELATIONS WITH OTHER AREA STATES, ESPECIALLY EGYPT AND KUWAIT, ARE DESIREABLE LUXURIES, IN SOME CASES PROVIDING CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC PAY OFF. THE SOVIETS ARE IN GOB PERCEPTION THE HOSTILE FORCE IN WORLD, WHILE IRAQ IS THE DEVIL CLOSER AT HAND. FROM TRADITION AND PRESENT NEED RULING AL KHALIFA FAMILY SEEKS A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH BOTH UK AND US. GOB LOOKS TO USG TO COMPLEMENT UK ROLE IN BAHRAIN (STRESSING NON-MILITARY ASPECT OF RELATIONSHIP), TO KEEP SOVIETS AT BAY, TO PROMOTE COOPERATION IN GULF, AND, ABOVE ALL, TO BRING ABOUT MIDDLE EAST PEACE.

- 1. POST-INDEPENDENCE ADJUSTMENT.BAHRAIN ABANDONED ITS LONG-STANDING TREATY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.K. WITH A CONSIDERABLE, AND LINGERING, SENSE OF MISGIVING, YET IN LESS THAN FOUR YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE THE GOB HAS ACHIEVED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS IN BUILDING EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS PROVIDING BAHRAIN PROTECTION AND SUPPORT IN A RATHER FRIGHTENING WORLD. THE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS POLICY HAS BEEN THE GOB'S CALCULATING SENSE OF BAHRAIN'S REAL INTERESTS AND A REFRESHINGLY INTELLIGENT REALIZATION OF BAHRAIN'S LIMITATIONS ON THE WORLD STAGE. THE BAHRAINI LEADERSHIP, NOTABLY THE TOP AL KHALIFA, SENSE THAT BAHRAIN HAS RELATIVELY LITTLE THE FOREIGNER WOULD WISH TO EXPLOIT AND HENCE MUST CULTIVATE EXTERNAL FRIENDSHIP AND EXPLOIT IT.
- 2. IRAN. WITH THE BRITISH PROTECTIVE UMBRELLA WITHDRAWN GOB CLEARLY REALIZES BAHRAIN EXISTS ON IRANIAN SUFFERANCE AND THAT IRAN IS THE ONLY REGIONAL STATE CAPABLE OF POLICING THE GULF AS A WHOLE. AS AN "ARAB" STATE BAHRAIN FEELS NEED TO MUTE ITS DEPENDENCE ON IRAN EVEN THOUGH IRANIAN CULTURAL (AND ETHNIC) INFLUENCE HERE IS STRONG AND OBVIOUS. MOREOVER THE AMIR AND OTHER TOP GOB OFFICIALS EXPRESS PRIVATELY CONCERN ABOUT THE MANNER IN WHICH IRAN MIGHT PLAY ITS GULF ROLE. THEY WANT TO SEE AN ADEQUATELY ARMED AND DISCREET IRAN SECURING GULF STABILITY RATHER THAN AN OVERARMED AND BUMPTIOUS IRAN DISTURBING IT. ESPECIALLY THE GOB WORRIES ABOUT WHAT IS TO COME AFTER SECRET

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PAGE 03 MANAMA 00163 01 OF 04 101403Z

THE SHAH.

3. SAUDI ARABIA. OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO BAHRAIN'S STABILITY, IS THE SUPPORT OF SAUDI ARABIA. SINCE SAUDI ARABIA IS "ARAB" THE GOB CAN MORE OPENLY PURSUE THE RELATIONSHIP. GOB LEADERS DESCRIBE SAUDI ARABIA AS THE "BACKBONE" OF STABILITY ON THE ARAB SIDE OF THE GULF AND URGE THE CLOSEST U.S. SUPPORT FOR KING FAISAL.

SINCE BAHRAIN'S OIL INDUSTRY DEPENDS LARGELY ON SAUDI CRUDE, THE SAUDI LEVERAGE OVER BAHRAIN'S ECONOMIC WEL-FARE IS OBVIOUS, NOT JUST TO THE GOB BUT ALSO TO ANY DISSIDENT ELEMENTS WHO MIGHT CONTEMPLATE SEIZING POWER IN BAHRAINIQ BEYOND THE DIRECT OIL RELATIONSHIP THE GOB RECOGNIZES THAT BAHRAIN'S ECONOMIC FUTURE LIES LARG-ELY IN PROVIDING A SERVICE COMMUNITY GEARED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SAUDI EASTERN PROVINCE. IN ADDITION, SAUDI ARABIA IS GENEROUS TO BAHRAIN. GIVEN THESE FACTORS. AND KING FAISAL'S PERSONAL PRESTIGE IN THE ARAB WORLD, THE GOB HAS LITTLE DIFFICULTY TUCKING ITSELF UNDER SAUDI SKIRTS IN PURSUING ITS BASIC FOREIGN POLICY. THE LIMITATION OF SAUDI INFLUENCE IS THAT BAHRAINIS CONSIDER THEMSELVSS SUBSTANTIALLY MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN SAUDIS. THE GOB LEADERSHIP IS TEMPTED TO SEEK A RELATIONSHIP PERMITTING, AT RISK OF AN ABSURD COMPARISON, BAHRAIN TO PLAY "ATHENS" TO A SAUDI "ROME". THE GOAL WOULD BE INCREASED COOPERATION AMONG THE ARAB GULF STATES UNDER SAUDI LEADERSHIP ON TERMS HIGHLY FAVORABLE TO BAHRAIN.

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 00163 02 OF 04 091836Z

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 EB-03 INR-05 NSC-05 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 1858

INFO MEMBASSY ABU DHABI UAE PRIORITY 0270 $\,$

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT LEBANON

AMEMBASSY CAIRO ARE

AMEMBASSY DOHA QATAR

AMEMBASSY AMMAN JORDAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI INDIA

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SECRET SECTION 2 OF 4 MANAMA 0163

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

IN THE PRESENT ABSENCE OF RAPID PROGRESS TOWARD THIS GOAL THE GOB IS CONTENT TO PRUSUE ITS OWN WELFARE WITHIN A SAUDI-IRANIAN PROTECTIVE SHELL. SHOULD SERIOUS STRAINS DEVELOP IN THE SAUDI-IRANIAN RELATIONSHIP, BAHRAIN'S FOREIGN POLICY WOULD BE IN REAL TROUBLE.

4. OTHER FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS.HAAVING JUST THE BASIC SECURITY REQUIREMENT OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN, BAHRAINI POLICY THEN SEEKS ON A REGIONAL BASIS SECRET

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PAGE 02 MANAMA 00163 02 OF 04 091836Z

THE "LUXURY" OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH OTHER ARAB NEIGHBORS.
(A) EGYPT. OF SPECIAL CONCERN IS EGYPT WHICH THE GOB
RECOGNIZES WITH REALISM AS THE CENTER OF ARAB POLITICAL
INFLUENCE. REMEMBERING THEIR FEAR OF THE "NASSERIST
REVOLUTION" THE AL KHALIFA ARE DELIGHTED WITH THE
"SADAT RESTORATION". THEIR AFFECTION FOR EGYPT IS
IMPERCEPTIBLE BUT THEIR RESPECT FOR SADAT, AND WORRY FOR

HIS SURVIVAL ALONG PRESENT MODERATE POLICY LINES, IS REAL. REALISTICALLY THE GOB DOES NOT SEEK A DYNAMIC BAHRAINI-EGYPTION RELATION; RATHER IT HOPES FOR A CORDIAL SAUDI-EGYPTIAN-IRANIAN RELATIONSHIP. (B) KUWAIT. THE RELATIONSHIP WITH KUWAIT IS MORE COMPLEX. THE KUWAITIS ARE THE ONLY GULF PEOPLE, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO THE SHAH AND FAISAL PERSONALLY, WHOM THE BAHRAINIS REALLY SEEM TO BOTH LIKE AND RESPECT. THE HISTORIC TIES, FAMILY AND COMMERCIAL, ARE CLOSE, IN THE BAD OLD DAYS THE RELATIVELY PROSPEROUS AL KHALIFA WERE GENEROUS TO THE AL SABAH; THE INVESTMENT HAS RECENTLY PAID OFF MANY TIMES OVER. BAHRAIN WANTS TO PURSUE THIS ATTRACTIVE RELATIONSHIP, BUT THE INCREASING GAP BETWEEN SUPER-WEALTHY KUWAIT AND BARELY AFFLUENT BAHRAIN LEAVES ITS PSYCHIC SCARS. OF SPECIAL PRACTICAL CONCERN IS HOW TO SOUARE A CLOSE BAHRAINI-KUWAITI RELATION WITH THE NECESSITY OF GETTING ALONG WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN, NEITHER CONSISTENT ADMIRERS OF KUWAITI POLITICAL ATMOSPHERICS AND FOREIGN POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS. THE AMIR TELLS US PRIVATELY, AND WITH SOME APPARNET CONCERN. "FAISAL AND THE SHAH ARE ANGRY AT ME FOR INHERITING THAT KUWAITI DISEASE, A NATIONAL

ASSEMBLY". NEXT MONTH THE PRIME MINISTER WILL GO TO KUWAIT TO BUFF UP THE FRAYED EDGES OF THE RELATIONSHIP. IN THEIR WEAKER MOMENTS THE AL KHALIFA WOULD LIKE TO THINK -ALL THOSE PALESTINIANS" HAVE MADE KUWAIT ACT "IRRESPONSIBLY", BUT FUNDAMENTALLY THEY SENSE THAT KUWAITI POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION AND PAN- ISM IS THE PATH THEY, AND EVENTUALLY THE REST OF THE GULF, MUST FOLLOW. HENCE GOB SOMETIMES APPEARS VEXED WITH KUWAIT WHEN GOK ACTIONS STRETCH THE GOB IN ITS STRADDLING OF THE IRANIAN-SAUDI-KUWAITI TRIANGLE. (C) OTHER CLOSE NEIGHBORS. THE AL KHALIFA EXPRESS AN APPARENTLY SINCERE AFFECTION FOR THE HASHEMITES, AND JORDANIAN SECURITY FORCE ADVISORS HAVE SECRET

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PAGE 03 MANAMA 00163 02 OF 04 091836Z

SERVED WELL HERE. INCREASED JORDANIAN/BAHRAINI COOPER-ATION, WHICH WOULD SERVE U.S. POLICY AIMS IN THE GULF. NEEDS LITTLE USG ENCOUCAGEMENT, YET HAS CERTAIN NATURAL LIMITS. BAHRAINI RELATIONS WITH THE UAE AND QATAR ARE COMPLICATED BY A BLEND OF TRADITIONAL PRIDE AND MODERN OPPORTUNISM. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THE "ARISTOCRATIC" AL KHALIFA (TRIBAL EQUALS OF THE AL SAUD AND AL SABAH AND MORE ADROIT WITH THE FLATWARE AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE THAN EITHER) TO ACCEPT ABU DHABI' AL NU'AYYIN AND PARTICULARLY THEIR FORMER "VASSALS" THE AL THANI OF QATAR AS "AMIRS". BAHRAIN' MOST SOPHISTICATED MERCHANT RECENTLY DESCRIBED ABU DHABIANS AND QATARIS TO ME AS "THOSE SAVAGES WHO RUIN OUR HARDEARNED REPUTATION IN THE BETTER CLUBS IN LONDON". HENCE THE GULF "FEDERATION OF NINE" NEVER GOT OFF THE DRAWING BOARD. YET GOB REALIZES UAE AND QATARI OIL WEALTH IS ALTERING THE TRADITIONAL PECKING ORDER, AND, MORE BASICALLY. THAT CLOSER GULF COOPERATION IS A FUTURE NECESSITY. DESPAIR-ING OF DOMINATING AN ENLARGED UAE. AND BEING UNWILLING TO PLAY A MINOR ROLE IN IT, GOB FOR THE MOMENT IS TALKING OF COOPERATION THROUGH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNITG RATHER THAN POLITICAL FEDERATION. IT LOOKS RATHER CASUALLY TOWARD A MORE DYNAMIC SAUDI GULF POLICY AS THE FUTURE UMBRELLA FOR PROMOTING REAL POLITICAL COOPERATION, PERHAPS EVEN CONFEDERATION. IN THE MEANTIME GOB IS HAPPY TO GIVE SHAIKH ZAYID ADVICE AND HOSPITALITY WHILE ACCEPTING HIS \$90 MILLION GIFTS AND

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 00163 03 OF 04 091916Z

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 1859

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU FHABI UAE PRIORITY

AMSMBASSY BEIRUT LEBANON 0472

AMEMBASSY CAIRA ARE

AMSMBASSY DOHA QATAR 00 2

AMEMBASSY AMMAN JORDAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON UK

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT OMAN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW USSR

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PK

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI INDIA

AMSMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN 0332

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV ISRAEL

USINT BAGHDAD IRAQ

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 4 MANAMA 00163

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

TO LET AMIR KHALIFA OF QATAR FINANCE GULF AIR JUMBO JET PURCHASES. TERRITORIAL DISPUTES WITH QATAR WILL HOPEFULLY BE KEPT SIMMERING WELL BELOW THE BOILING POINT, AND POSSIBLY SETTLED IN THE NAME OF GULF UNITY ONCE THE PRICE IS RIGHT. (D) "THE LOT" GOB IS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY VAGUE IN ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD OMAN, WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE SULTAN, RELIEVED HE HAS BRITISH AND IRANIAN ASSISTANCE, (WHILE PREFERRING HE HAD STRONGER ARAB SUPPORT), BUT NOT VISIBLY ALARMED ABOUT DHOFAR. THE AMIR IS REMARKABLY SECRET

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PAGE 02 MANAMA 00163 03 OF 04 091916Z

CANDID IN HIS DISTASTE FOR PALESTINIANS BUT HE WANTS THEIR PROBLEM SETTLED. GOB HAS NO LOVE FOR SYRIA BUT IS PREPARED TO HAVE DECENT RELATIONS ON THE BASIS OF RECENT EVIDENCE

OF IMPROVED BEHAVIOR. PAKISTAN AND INFIA, TRADITIONALLY AND INCREASINGLY SOURCES OF LABOR HERE, SEEM SURPRISINGLY REMOTE FROM GOB FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS; RELATIONS ARE FRIENDLY BUT LOW KEY. LEBANON IS TOLERATED BUT UNLOVED.

5. THE ENEMIES. IN THE GOB PERCEPTION, NOTABLY THE AMIR'S AND PRIME MINISTER'S, THE SOVIETS ARE THE THREAT TO A PEACEFUL AND PROSPERING GULF. ON THE STRATEGIC LEVEL THE GOB LOOKS TO THE USG TO KEEP THE RUSSIANS AT BAY, AND TO DO SO OUTSIDE THE GULF. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF SUBVERSION THE AL KHALIFA ARE CLEARLY WORRIED ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS TOWARD BAHRAIN, AND PARITCULARLY ABOUT THE ONGOING INFLUENCE OF SOVIET EDUCATION (THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS ARRANGED SEMI-CLANDESTINELY IN BEIRUT) ON A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF BAHRAIN'S YOUTH. IN THE AL KHALIFA PERSPECTIVE THE DEMON CLOSER AT HAND IS IRAQ, WHICH THE GOB REGARDS WITH A MIXTURE OF WORRY, IRRITATION AND DISDAIN. THE THOUGHT THAT IRAQ IS BECOMING THE SOVIET "AGENT" IN THE GULF PARTICULARLY ALARMS THE GOB, WHICH FEELS MORE ASSURED DEALING WITH "BAATHIST" SUBVERSION THAN WITH "COMMUNIST" INFILTRATION. GOB FEELS IT MUST MAINTAIN CIVIL RELATIONS WITH BAGHDAD, BUT THE AMIR AND PRIME MINISTER PARTICULARLY LOSE NO CHANCE TO EXPRESS THEIR LOATHING FOR BUMBLING IRAQI ATTEMPTS TO SUBVERT AND INFLUENCE BAHRAIN. PDRY SEEMS FAR AWAY, AND THE AL KHALIFA ARE INCLINED TO KEEP IT THERE. ISRAEL, OF COURSE, IS A SPECIAL CASE. THE GOB (VERY QUIETLY) SAYS IT SHOULD EXIST IN PEACE WITH ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS, AND WITHIN 1967 BOUNDARIES.

6. "THE GREAT POWER". THE STEADYING BRITISH HAND ON BAHRAINI POLICY IS MUCH LIGHTER THAN IN THE PAST BUT FAR FROM COMPLETELY WITHDRAWN. GOB SHOWS NO INCLINATION TO SEE ITS PRESENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.K. DIMINISH FURTHER. IN FACT ONE SENSES GOB IS MORE INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING THE TIES THAN IS THE U.K., EXCEPT IN THE BUSINESS SPHERE. PERHAPS UNIQUELY AMONG THE GULF STATES THE GOB, OR MORE PRECISELY THE AL KHALIFA LEADERSHIP, SECRET

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PAGE 03 MANAMA 00163 03 OF 04 091916Z

DISPLAYS A YEARNING FOR A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP", INDEED VIRTUALLY A "SILENT" RELATIONSHIP, WITH THE "GREAT POWER". AS BAHRAIN'S RELATIVE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE IN THE GULF SPECTRUM RAPIDLY DIMINISHES THE DESIRE FOR THIS SPECIAL LINK TO THE WEST IS INTENSIFIED. IN MODERN TIMES BAHRAIN SEEMS TO HAVE PERCEIVED "THE GREAT POWER" AS NOT SOLELY BRITISH BUT AS "ANGLO-AMERICAN". AFTER ALL, FIRST "THE MISSIONARIES" AND THEN "THE OIL COMPANY" WERE AMERICAN, NOT BRITISH. TO AN EXTENT SINCE WORLD WAR II THE BAHRAINIS

SEEM TO HAVE VIEWED THE U.K.AS THE U.S. "AGENT" IN THE GULF. HENCE GOB IS EAGERLY RECEPTIVE TO CLOSE OFFICIAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.G., NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF BUT AS A COMPLEMENT TO ITS RELATIONS WITH THE U.K. TO DATE TWO ASPECTS OF THE POST-INDEPENDENCE U.S.-BAHRAINI RELATION-SHIP TROUBLE BAHRAINI LEADERS. ONE IS THE EFFECT OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM ON U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS. RECOGNIZING ITS OWN WEAKNESS AND NEED TO FOLLOW THE ARAB HERD, GOB EXPRESSES RESTRAINED ANXIETY ABOUT THE URGENCY OF OUR GETTING ON WITH PROMOTING A MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND CONSOLIDATING THE U.S. POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD. IN AN ERA OF GOOD U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS BAHRAIN SEEKS THE "BEST" RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. IF THE U.S. SHOULD FALL PRECIPITOUSLY FROM GRACE IN ARAB EYES GOB WOULD TEND TO RUN FOR COVSR. THE SECOND PROBLEM IS THE U.S. NAVY PRES-ENCE, AND ISSUE EXACERBATED BY TALK OF AMERICAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE GULF. IN AN ERA OF U.S.-ARAB GOOD FEELING GOB SEEMS PREPARED TO HARBOR THE U.S. NAVY FOR

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 00163 04 OF 04 091841Z

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 1861

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UAE PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY DOHA QATAR

AMEMBASSY AMMAN JORDAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

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AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW USSR

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI INDIA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV ISRAEL USINT BAGHDAD IRAQ

S E C R E T SECTION 4 OF 4 MANAMA 0163

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

A PRICE, BUT IT IS CONCERNED THAT THE OVERALL U.S.BAHRAINI RELATIONSHIP BE SUFFICIENTLY BROAD AND ACTIVE
TO PUT THE NAVY PRESENCE IN ACCEPTABLE PERSPECTIVE. HENCE
THE GOB SEEKS A TECHINCAL ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH
THE USG, PARTICULARLY WELCOMES HIGH LEVEL CIVILIAN
VISITORS, AND IS GRATIFIED BY U.S. POLICY SUPPORT FOR
EXPANDING AMERICAN PRIVATE BUSINESS RELATIONS WITH BAHRAIN.
IN SHORT, WHAT THE BAHRAINIS WANT FROM US IN BAHRAIN
AND IN THE GULF GENERALLY, IS ADROIT AND RAPID IMPLEMENTSECRET

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PAGE 02 MANAMA 00163 04 OF 04 091841Z

ATION OF OUR GULF POLICY. WHAT THEY WANT FROM US IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS PEACE.
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Message Attributes

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